United Nations S/2003/29

Security Council

Distr.: General
9 January 2003
English
Original: French

Letter dated 8 January 2003 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to the statement of the President of the Security Council dated 18 December 2002 (S/PRST/2002/40) concerning the situation in Burundi and to the Ceasefire Agreement which was signed by the Transitional Government of Burundi and the Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie-Forces pour la défense de la démocratie (CNDD-FDD) in Arusha on 2 December 2002.

I am pleased to inform the members of the Security Council that the Secretariat stands ready in principle to provide the necessary expertise and advice for the planned African mission provided for in the Ceasefire Agreement.

As it is essential to maintain the momentum generated by the Agreement, the Secretariat has already developed the proposed terms of reference for the chairman of the Joint Ceasefire Commission and is approaching Member States to ascertain their interest in nominating suitable candidates to fill such a position. A preliminary planning exercise has also begun with a view to assisting, if required, with the development of a plan of operations for the proposed African mission.

At the same time, the Secretariat urgently awaits additional information from the parties, the Facilitator of the Burundi peace process and/or the Regional Initiative in order to proceed with the provision of additional assistance. The information needed includes inter alia:

- Relationship of the Joint Ceasefire Commission to the African mission;
- Definition of the objectives and mandate of the African mission;
- Urgent identification of a lead nation for the proposed African mission;
- Identification of focal points within all Burundian parties involved to provide the necessary information, including the number and location of troops combatants, weapons, supply requirements, number of dependants, logistical and communication equipment and transportation needs;
- Identification of special needs and gaps in logistical support among potential troop-contributing countries;
- Agreement as soon as possible, with expert assistance, on key modalities of cantonment of the armed Burundian elements (including location, size,

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transportation of combatants, availability of locally produced food, availability of water and accessibility).

It should be noted that the Secretariat awaits a formal request from the parties regarding the provision of a senior military officer to chair the Joint Ceasefire Commission. My Special Representative for Burundi is expected to take up these and other crucial issues with his regional interlocutors.

The coming weeks will be critical for the peace process in Burundi. I look forward to working closely with members of the Security Council, as well as the wider donor community, to increase the efforts of the United Nations to assist the Burundian parties and the regional leaders in realizing a lasting peace in Burundi, which has remained elusive for so long.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**